

**The Commission for Historical and Architectural  
Preservation - Staff Report  
January 16, 2007**

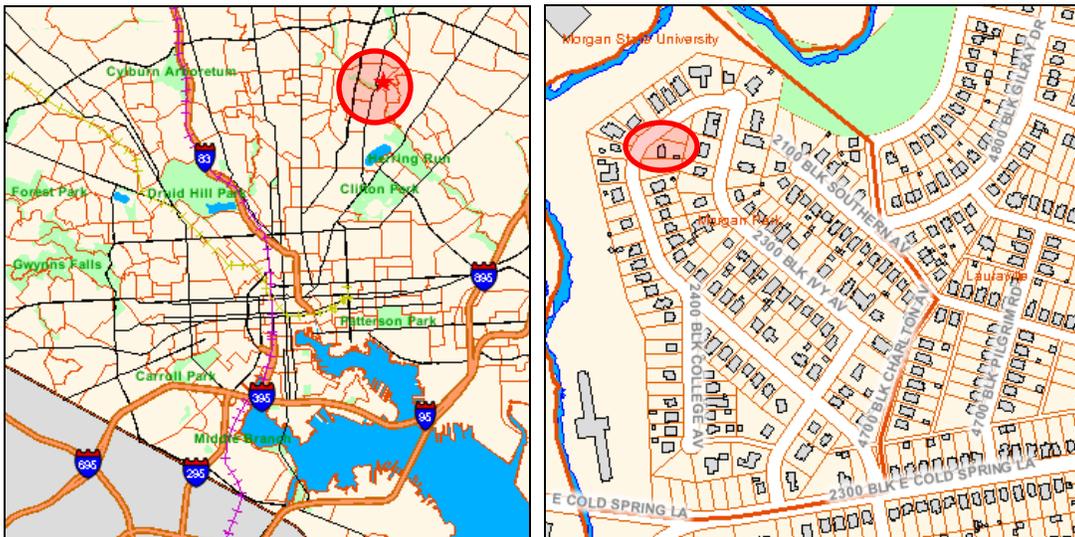


**Landmark Designation Report  
W.E.B. Du Bois House  
2302 Montebello Terrace  
Baltimore, MD**

The Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) has the responsibility of recommending to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore the adoption of ordinances designating districts and landmarks within the limits of the City of Baltimore, having special historical, architectural, educational, cultural, social or community significance, interest, or value as Baltimore City Historic Districts or Landmarks, thereby necessitating their preservation and protection. In making its recommendation, the Commission shall give appropriate consideration to the following standards. In reaching its decision, the Commission shall clearly state which standards have been applied.

A Baltimore City Landmark may be a site, structure, landscape, building (or portion thereof), place, work of art, or other object which:

1. dates from a particular period having a significant character, interest, or value, as part of the development, heritage, or culture of the City of Baltimore; or
2. is associated with the life of an outstanding historical person or persons; or
3. is the site of an historic event with a significant effect upon the cultural, political, economic, social, or historic heritage of the City of Baltimore; or
4. is significant of the architectural period in which it was built and has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, method of construction, or engineering, or is the notable work of a master builder, designer, engineer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or
5. contributes information of historical, cultural, or social importance relating to the heritage of the community; or
6. has yielded, or may be likely to yield, archeological information important in history or prehistory.



**The W.E.B. Du Bois House is located in the Morgan Park Neighborhood in Northeast Baltimore.**

### **Staff Recommendation: Approve Landmark Designation:**

The W.E.B. Du Bois house, located at 2302 Montebello Terrace in the Morgan Park neighborhood, **meets landmark standard for designation number 2** as a building “associated with the life of an outstanding historical person.” W.E.B Du Bois owned this house from 1939 to 1950.

In 1939, W.E.B. Du Bois, world renowned African American scholar and activist, hired C. J. White, an architect/builder, to design and build a house for him at 2302 Montebello Terrace. In the spring of 1940, Du Bois’ wife Nina, daughter Yolande Williams, and granddaughter Du Bois Williams moved into the house. On July 1, 1950, Nina Du Bois passed away. On February 14, 1951, W.E.B. Du Bois married Shirley Graham. Shortly after Nina’s death, Du Bois sold the house to Leo and Geneva Woods. The house is still owned by the Woods family.

### **History:**

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born on February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts where he grew up. In 1888, Du Bois graduated from Fisk University located in Nashville, Tennessee. Here, Du Bois experienced for the first time rural black culture and Southern racism, which influenced him greatly. In 1888, He entered Harvard and in 1896, after studying at the University of Berlin in 1892-94, earned his Ph.D., the first African American to do so at Harvard. His dissertation, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States, 1638-1870*, became the first volume published in Harvard’s Historical Studies series. In 1896 while teaching Latin and Greek at Wilberforce University in Ohio, he married Nina Gomer. In 1897 he began teaching at the University of Pennsylvania and published *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, the first sociological analysis of an urban community. At the end of the year, he began teaching at Atlanta University. In 1903 he published his most famous book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. He would go on to publish a total of fifteen books on race and politics, three novels, two autobiographies, and numerous essays and works of fiction and poetry.

His publishing activities did not eclipse his political activism. In fact, a 2000 poll of African-American political scientists ranked Du Bois the second most important African American leader, second only to Martin Luther King Jr.

In 1905 Du Bois helped to form the Niagara Movement, a group that strongly condemned racial discrimination and demanded for African Americans the right to vote, economic and educational equality, and the end to segregation. In 1908 the Niagara Movement disbanded, allowing for the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Between 1910 and 1934, Du Bois was the founder and editor of *The Crisis* magazine, published monthly by the NAACP. In 1919 he called for the second Pan-African Congress to be held in Paris (the first Congress was held in 1900 where Du Bois was secretary). This began the Pan-African Movement (later in 1945 he is hailed as the father of the movement). In 1934, he resigned from *The Crisis* and returned to Atlanta University (1934-44) as head of the Department of Sociology where

he published *Black Reconstruction* which argued that the Reconstruction after the Civil War was one of America's finest efforts in the struggle for democracy and equality.

In 1939 W.E.B. Du Bois built his house in Montebello Park where his family lived until 1950. During this time, Du Bois retired from Atlanta University (1944), accepted a position as director of the Department of Special Research at the NAACP, represented the NAACP at the founding conference of the United Nations, and became the chairman for the Peace Information Center in New York.

In 1946, in an article entitled "My Golden Wedding" written to commemorate his fiftieth wedding anniversary, Du Bois described the importance of home:

...Somehow I remember life, curiously enough, chiefly as a succession of homes; the settlement at Philly at 7<sup>th</sup> and Lombard in the slums...; then the apartment at Atlanta University- the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor where we spied the dome of the capitol of Georgia...

Then Green Street, Brooklyn, a gracious home which I loved, with a fireplace worth a king's ransom; then Harlem – and Harlem and Harlem; and finally the new cottage in Baltimore. Home was a shifting backdrop with gay wings for the drama of life – gay and grim.

In 1951, after selling his house in Baltimore he married Shirley Graham, a noted musician, teacher, and writer. During this time he was indicted by the Justice Department and tried and acquitted for subversive activity charges related to his work as chairman of the Peace Information Center. In 1961, he became a member of the Communist Party U.S.A., and in 1963 he became a citizen of Ghana. Du Bois died on August 27, 1963, the day before the March on Washington.



**W.E.B. Du Bois House, January 3, 2007**



**W.E.B. Du Bois House 1940s, picture from <http://www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/collections/galleries/dubois12.htm>**



**W.E.B. Du Bois in front of his Baltimore Home (Left) and DuBois Williams, W.E.B. Du Bois' granddaughter, in front of their home, 1940s (right). Picture from <http://www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/collections/galleries/dubois12.htm>**